PASTORAL LIFE

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A PUBLICATION For PRIESTS

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER, 1953

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VOL. I, NO. 6 November - December, 1953

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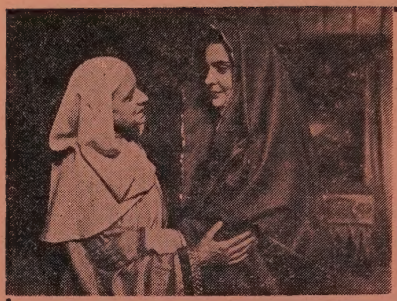

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PASTORAL LIFE

VOL. I, No. 6 November - December, 1953

The Priestly Actions of Christ

The Most Reverend John Wright, D.D.
Bishop of Worcester

CHRIST is our great High Priest. He is, in fact, our only priest, the sole priest by nature and by right known to God or men.

All others, we who call ourselves and are rightly called His priests, are priests by delegation, ordination and privilege. We are participants, by God's mercy and calling, in a priesthood which belongs exclusively and by its very nature to Christ and to Him alone.

The very notion of priesthood indicates why these things must necessarily be so. A priest is a bridge-builder between God and Man. He is a reconciler between creature and Creator. But no human can fulfil such functions on his own, nor can he possibly presume to an office so transcendent unless he be called as Aaron was and deputed by God Himself.

Christ, true God of true God, yet true Man as well, takes by His unique position a place between God and men, reconciling within Himself the natures of both. He is one at once with the Creator, being God, and with the creature, being man. In His person are reconciled all that priesthood exists to bring together. They are found in Him by the very circumstances

Bishop Wright's scholarly books, articles and lectures are nationally known. The Editors and readers are truly indebted to His Excellency for this inspiring and enlightening article.

of His being. Christ is a priest as I am a man. He was born a priest, something impossible in any case but His.

Hence it is that Christ, Who alone is holy, alone most high and alone Lord, is also a priest by nature and by right.

This is not to say that the priesthood of His ministers is the less a cause of wonder to ourselves or of edification and profit to others. Just as all sanctity is derived from His holiness but is not the less wonderful for that; just as all salvation comes from Him but is not the less desirable for that; just as all sovereignty derives from Him but is not the less sacred for that, so all priesthood is His, but not the less enviable a vocation for those called to share it.

Quite the contrary: The very wonder of our priesthood lies, of course, in its identity with His. Such power as we have to save our souls or to serve others derives from the divine power of Christ's priesthood shared by His priests.

The unicity of the priesthood of Christ provides a norm by which we can best judge the things which every other priest is called to do. All priesthood must be judged in its powers and its responsibilities by the priesthood of Christ. What is priestly and what is not; what is the work of a priest and what is not; what is the priesthood called upon to accomplish in our day and from what is it bound to abstain: all these questions are easily answered in the light of the life and the work of the sole priest, Jesus Christ.

Nature of Christ's Priesthood

It sometimes seems that we priests ourselves have a very limited idea of the nature of the priesthood of Christ. As a consequence, we are prone to have an inadequate concept of the extent of Christ's priestly activity, and this inadequate notion, in turn, seriously limits the scope of our own priestly aspirations, activity and effectiveness.

A simple point will exemplify what I mean. The stereotype image of Christ the Priest is likely to be the picture of the Last Supper. At the very most, the stereotyped concept of Christ as a priest extends to the inclusion of the priestly action of Christ on Calvary. The Last Supper with the institution of the Mass, the Sacrifice on Calvary from which the Mass and all things else derive their supernatural efficacy, these are the usual ways in which even we priests frequently think of the priesthood of Christ at work.

Steroetypes are never more than partially accurate and are almost always misleading. The stereotypes concerning the priesthood of Christ and the range of its activity are subject to this same broad principle. Let no one mis-

understand. It was, of course, at the Last Supper that Christ communicated His priesthood to us, making it available to the centuries and to generations of men through the ministry of other men who would be Christ's ministers. It was at the Last Supper that the priesthood was shared with us, but it was not at the Last Supper that the priesthood of Christ came into being. Christ functioned as a priest at the Last Supper, but He had been a priest from the moment of the Incarnation.

It was in the first moment of His conception that Christ became a priest. From that moment He was a natural Mediator between God and man, a supernatural being reconciling creature and Creator. In this lies the essence of His priesthood.

Accordingly, all the acts of His life, those on Calvary supremely but all the others too, are priestly acts. If we wish to know the works of the priesthood, we must therefore focus our attention on the Eucharistic table of the Last Supper and on the altar of Calvary. We will also fix our attention on the sanctuary and on the Eucharistic table which, in the Holy Church, perpetuate the Last Supper and Calvary. But we must also seek Christ as a priest in all the other activities of His redemptive career on earth. A wider concept and deeper understanding of the priesthood of Christ will then be ours and the priestly actions of Christ will be appreciated the more. Perhaps the result will be an extension and an intensification of our own activity as priests.

Christ was a priest when He consecrated for the first time the species of bread and wine, but He was also a priest when He was found as a youth disputing with the doctors of His day and seeking to answer their questions on we know not how wide a range of subjects.

Christ was a priest when, stripped of His garments, He offered Himself for the sins of mankind on the rude altar of the Cross, but He was also a priest when He sat by night in earnest conversation with Nicodemus, patiently and tolerantly presenting to an intellectual of His day the eternal wisdom of God.

Christ was a priest when He forgave sins and when He communicated to His Apostles the power to do the same, but He was also a priest when He sat by the well at high noon and conversed with the Samaritan, a woman not of His own race or tribe, an alien and a heretic, but the object nonetheless of the priestly ministrations and the friendly influence of Christ.

Christ was a priest when He gathered with His Apostles and disciples, so many of them predestined to be among His saints, instructing them in the rule of His Church after He would have ascended into heaven, but He was

also a priest when He sat at the table of Simon, banqueting with the guests of Simon and proclaimed His sympathy with and forgiveness of the sinful woman.

Christ was a priest when He defended His own authority, the sacred authority by which He preached, instituted His Church, established His hierarchy and gave His authoritative mandate to His apostles and priests, but He was also a priest when He deferred to the authority of Caesar and counselled His followers to be exact in the fulfilment of their civic duties in deference to the duly constituted authority of the state.

Christ was a priest when the angels came to minister to Him in the Garden of Gethsemani and, acolyte-fashion, bowed before Him in the moment of His solemn sacrifice, but He was also a priest when He played with the children by the roadside to the dismay and impatience of His apostles.

Christ was a priest on the road to Emmaus when He paused to break bread, perhaps in a Eucharistic rite, with the discouraged disciples and when He explained the Scriptures to them, but He was also a priest when He was present at the marriage feast of Cana, when He eased the natural worries of the friends of the young bride and when He joined in the rejoicing of her family and that of her spouse.

Christ was a priest when He promised to His apostles and to His Church that Holy Spirit of Truth, the Paraclete, which He alone could promise and which it is the office of His priesthood to diffuse in the world, but He was also a priest when He consorted with sinners for His own divine purposes and when He fed the multitude so that they would have physical strength to listen to His word.

Christ was a priest when He communicated to us, authoritatively and with divine persuasion, the eternal truths of God, the infinite wisdom that He could know only as God, but He was also a priest when He had the experiences which could only be His as a man, the human experiences which are reflected in the manner of His teaching, His style and His phrasing, His figures of speech and examples, all the delicate poetry and sensitive prose by which He gave outward expression to the inward wisdom of His divine teaching.

The human experiences of Jesus, those of His boyhood, young manhood and mature life, are reflected in His parables, similes and teachings of every kind. These tell us so much about Christ, the type of life He led, the human interests which He cherished and His nearness to the multitude with all their hopes, problems and pleasures. It is well to remember that in all these experiences Christ was a priest.

It is possible and permissible to speak of the "literary style" of Christ, since He taught in human words, appealing to human emotions and experiences in His teaching. The discourses of Christ do not reflect the mind of a man who dwelt in ivory towers or who secluded Himself in remote academic separation from those to whom He preached. Rather, the sermons and the conversations of Jesus reflect a mind which was intensely practical and which, humanly speaking, had prepared itself to preach to the people by close association with the people themselves.

His was a mind which knew the worry of the widow who has lost even a small piece of money. It was a mind which knew the conversations of the market place, the talk by the hearthside in the kitchens of the poor, the games of the children who play and dance in the streets, the language of the shops, farms and fields.

The priestly mind of Christ was enriched by the eternal wisdom of God, to be sure, but it was a mind which meditated that wisdom in terms intelligible to people who had to put new wine in old bottles because they could not afford better; who were used to patching old garments with raw cloth because they had no better; who were close to beasts of burden, wedding feasts, sick beds and all the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries of the lives of ordinary people.

It is important that we priests note carefully all these characteristics of the mind of Jesus, because they demonstrate unmistakably that He was not merely a priest when He preached but also a priest when He had the experiences reflected in the very style and content of His preaching. They remind us that He was a priest when He went from the Cenacle to Calvary, but also when He went a-fishing.

Christ was a priest in His miracles, His knowledge, His dignity, His sacramental action; above all, He was a priest in His obedience. Indeed, it was by His obedience that He was made a Priest. It was not by His wisdom, nor by His power, nor by His sanctity that Jesus was made a priest. It was when He bowed before the mandate of His Father, emptied Himself and took the form of a servant, becoming obedient even unto death, that Christ became a priest. It is in our obedience that our own priesthood is born and brought to perfection.

Such reflection on the priestly actions of Christ opens up refreshed vistas for the increased, extended and intensified use of our own priesthood, since it is always the priesthood of Christ communicated to us so that we may use it consistently with His original priestly example.

To whom, for example, was

Christ a priest? He was a priest to His own, the apostles, disciples and immediate followers of His Gospel. But He was also a priest to all those into whose lives He entered, no matter what the manner or capacity in which He touched their lives. He was a priest to everyone.

Practical Conclusions

So must we be. We are called to be priests to our own parishioners and to those who turn to us for sacramental ministrations or to hear from us the preaching of the Word of God. But we must also be priests to the civil community in which we live, to every shopkeeper whose store we enter, to every stranger who salutes us on the street and even to those who withhold their salutation, but who pass along our way.

To what, by way of further example, did the priestly interest of Christ extend? It extended, of course, to the sacraments which He instituted, to the Gospel which He preached, to the immediate, direct and obvious interests of the Church which He founded. But it extended much further. It extended to everything which comes within the compass of His father's solicitude and of the sanctifying power of His Holy Spirit. It extended to everything that His Father has made, and that means, directly or indirectly, to all things that are.

The great pagan philosopher said that, being a human, nothing human was alien to Him. Christ could say that, being God, nothing He has made was beyond the pale of His divine interest and being a priest, charged to reconcile all things with God, nothing that needed the blessing of God or that came from the creative hand of God was beyond the realm of His solicitude.

We who are priests must say the same. There are proper degrees in the directness of our interest in things and there are inevitable, necessary and wholesome areas of special priestly concern or of a certain priestly reserve. But everything that is human, everything that is the fruit of divine creative action, everything that needs God's blessing or the hallowing of His Holy Spirit is the object of truly priestly interest. The priestly activity of Christ was universal; He expects that ours will be of a like scope, just so it always be priestly.

If our priestly activity be as universal and as all-embracing as that of Christ the Priest, what a world of opportunity for apostolic achievement invites our interest and our energies. There is so much to be done by priests who have such a concept of their priesthood and of the true scope of its activity.

Every area of life, thought and action calls for the consecrated

help of priests thus Christ-minded in their understanding of the priesthood. So many classrooms and lecture halls, forums and publications eagerly await the word spoken by Jesus in the midst of the doctors in the temple. So many conventions, clubs and public meetings are willing to hear the voice that Jesus lifted up in the market places and in the public squares.

So many young people, at the age in their lives where recreation is both natural and desirable, would welcome in their play the beneficent, friendly influence that the priesthood of Jesus made felt in the games along the roadsides of Judaea and Galilee.

So many spouses, vexed by graver problems than a shortage of refreshments, need nothing so much as they need the strength, encouragement and kindliness that the priesthood of Jesus brought to the marriage feast of Cana.

So many sinners are far, far more anxious for absolution than the world supposes, and will shed tears of mingled contrition and joy so often as one of us is prompted to repeat the message of hope that Jesus wrote in the sand for the encouragement of the sinful woman.

So many intellectuals, poets, professors and scientists, far from being antagonistic to the good news of the Gospel, are in fact wistfully awaiting the invitation to come, even though it be secretly and half-embarrassed, to converse with Christ's modern priests as Nicodemus once came by night to consult with Him.

So many "outsiders", alien to our ways by reason of inherited prejudices and misunderstandings, would give much, very much, if those who shared Christ's priesthood would only share His manner, understanding and zeal as these were revealed in the conversation at the well between Christ, the sole Priest, and the Samaritan woman of old.

Nothing of what we have said here is in any sense new. There is not needed a new concept of the priesthood; in point of fact, any new concept would, by the very nature of things, be false and foolish. But there is needed a renewed appreciation of the old truth, the unchanging truth, concerning our priesthood and its scope. That priesthood is not really ours at all; it is Christ's and His alone. We have it by participation, by delegation, by ordination. It is ours to use only as its true Owner would wish and in the spirit in which He used it during His earthly life, immortalized in the sacred pages of the Gospels.

If anyone ask what activities become the good priest, let him read the words and the works of Jesus as these are contained in the New Testament. There he shall find his answer.

What Is Not In The Bible

Rev. Nicola Fusco

FOR forty years, it has been, indeed, a frightful experience to go to the Altar every morning and begin the Holy Mass with those tremendous words, **Judica me, Deus!**

How can any man ever dare to call upon God as the Judge of his own conduct, while still alive?

Is it not bad enough to think of the **dies irae**, of that awful day, **quando judex est venturus, cuncta stricte discussurus?** Of that day, under the wrath of which **vix justus sit securus?**

All the Saints and all the Fathers of the Church teach us that Christ alone can say: **Quis ex vobis arguet me de peccato?** (John 8, 46). And he can say so, because He is God.

We poor sinners, instead of defying God with that arrogant **Judica me, Deus,** must forever be on our knees and cry out, **Non intres in judicium cum servo tuo, Domine, quia nullus apud te justificabitur homo, nisi per te omnium peccatorum ei tribuatur remissio. —Lord, do not call thy servant to account; for no one can stand guiltless in thy presence unless thou grant him forgiveness of all his sins.**

It is, therefore, a great relief to learn that the Holy Ghost has not inspired the Psalmist to say, **Judica me, Deus.**

The Pontifical Biblical Institute, after long and exhaustive researches, has definitively discovered that the Psalmist did not say, **Judica me, Deus,** but, **Jus redde mihi, Deus.** He did not say, **Judge**

Father Fusco's contributions to the cultural and religious life of the Pittsburgh community are well known. He writes brilliantly both in English and in Italian.

me, o God, but, **Do me justice, o God!**

The Psalmist, in this Psalm 42, does not expose himself to God's justice, but invokes the divine justice in his behalf: **Do me justice, o God, and fight my fight against a race of men not holy; save me from a treacherous and iniquitous enemy.**

And thus, as the true meaning of the Word of God is clarified, the real spirit of Holy Mother Church becomes more luminous to the eyes of her children.

The Church, in her motherly stature, does not want her Priests to approach the Altar with fear in their hearts and tremor in their voices.

She wants her Priests to disarm God's justice with an open confession of their sins and become worthy of His divine mercy.

Exegetists and Scriptural commentators, up to now, have zealously exploited their imagination in order to reconcile that famous **Judica me, Deus** with the motherly spirit of the Church.

Domenico Giuliotti, in his comment on the Mass, **"Il Ponte sul mondo,"** appears bewildered at the exclamation **Judica me,** and says: "But now the Priest, looking again within himself, faces once more his former self, the sinful man, the carnal and animal man of yesterday, that does not want to die and holds him fast, and defiles him, nor will leave him free; then, he almost calls up God to avenge Himself upon his life."

This book is duly furnished with an **Imprimatur,** though leaning to the left in matters of spirituality. However, the statement above quoted is well corroborated by other biblical commentators, St. Augustine not excepted. As a matter of fact, it can be safely said that it epitomizes all that has been stated by others in that regard.

But, however this may be, it is a relief to know that the **Judica me, Deus,** is not in the Bible and that the Priest of tomorrow will begin his Mass, not with terror in his heart, but with all that consoling hope of which the Church Militant is capable, when he will cry out, **Jus redde mihi, Deus. — Do me justice, o God!.**

II.

Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam. No matter how old is the Priest, he has been saying those sacred words ever since he was in the flower of his youth.

His morning cry is that word **Introibo,** which renews his youth. He is proud of that early cry of every day in his life. He lives for it.

You see, he is not one who turned to his God in the eleventh hour, when he was loaded with troubles or striken by the many infirmities of old age. He is one who conse-

Contributions Are Welcome

While the Editors of PASTORAL LIFE shall endeavor to commission appropriately chosen articles from qualified clerical writers, they wholeheartedly invite priests and Religious to share their knowledge and experiences on any pastoral subject that may fall within the scope of this periodical.

All material offered for publication should be sent to: **The Editor, PASTORAL LIFE, 2187 Victory Boulevard, Staten Island 14, N. Y.**

crated himself wholly to God when he had just attained the fulness of his manhood, when his youth, like the sun in the sky, made all things beautiful and life most desirable.

He is one who, above all things, dedicated to God his youth, and youth is what he recovers every time he ascends the Altar and says, **Introibo ad Altare Dei, ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam.**

A true Priest keeps himself supremely young even in his advanced age. His youthful energy is due mainly to his life of chastity, which does not only preserve his physical and spiritual stamina, but also coordinates and renders them most productive in the service of Christ.

The permanence of his youth is, above all, the fruit of his daily Mass.

All men begin to get old both in spirit and flesh, in heart and mind as soon as they discover that they no longer have a predominant goal in life, that is, as soon as they begin to feel that they have become useless and supernumerary. Let a man retire from work and, if a sensitive man, he will soon after retire also from life. Let a man have his pension and he will next seek death.

The Priest, on the contrary, never gets old. Men can say with the Psalmist (Ps. 89), **Summa annorum nostrorum sunt septuaginta anni et, si validi sumus, octoginta.** But the Priest, very often is destined to a patriarchal age. His prodigious longevity is proverbial throughout the world. He has something to live for until his last hour on earth.

Even though his senility or some other infirmity renders him incapacitated and no longer permits him to minister to his people, he still remains a Priest. And as long as he can celebrate the Holy Mass, the most sublime function ever performed on earth, he has always an infinite value in the eyes of the Church.

It is indeed very consoling to repeat every morning those beau-

tiful words of Psalm 42 concerning the eternal youth of the Priesthood. For the Psalmist they were a prophecy, for the Priest a promise, a sublime promise which makes the yoke of his difficult and laborious mission both light and sweet.

In them the Priest finds strength, courage, trust and an intense longing for the divinity. **Introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum qui laetificat juventutem meam.**

●

However, the new translation of the Psalms reveals that this passage, in the original Biblical text, says nothing about **juventutem.**

"The Hebrew Text of that passage," writes Abbot Giuseppe Ricciotti, "reads thus: **Et introibo ad altare Dei, ad Deum laetitiae et exultationis meae.**

"This also is what we find in the Aramaic Text of Targum.... The Pontifical Biblical Institute has accepted the original Hebrew, which excludes altogether the word **juventutem**, and by making a slight correction, gives us the following rendering, **I will come up to the Altar of God, to the God of my joy, and in gladness I will hymn Thee with the harp, o Lord, my God."**

But the word "youth" is not to be found in Psalm 42. It was not there. Yet it cannot be dissociated from the Altar of God. The Priest placed it there when he first came to it, long ago, and shall always find it there, every morning, until he will say his last Mass.

THE FIFTH GOSPEL

The Catholic Press can be called an "Angel" in the root sense of a Messenger from God to men. Like Gabriel of old, it still brings to men the tidings brought to Mary; like Raphael, it proffers to afflicted society remedies of heavenly efficacy and is the faithful guardian of the way; like Michael, it is a prince among the heavenly host, it defends us in battle and it aspires to be our protection against the snares of the enemy on the many fields of modern thought and debate.

The four Evangelists are so-called because they are the "messengers of good tidings," the "angels" of blessed news. With all due reverence, the writers in the Catholic Press can be called the Evangelists of the present day; the weekly and monthly issues of your publications, although not divinely inspired, may be called the Scriptures of our times. Everyone will know what I mean when I call the Catholic Press the Fifth Gospel, the Gospel which records the activity from day to day of Christ and his Holy Spirit in the world.

—Archbishop Cushing

Priestly Work - The Rectory

Rev. Urban Wagner, O.F.M. Conv., J.C.D.

IT was Saturday afternoon, about fifteen minutes before confession time, in a busy, downtown parish in northern Ohio. The three priests, who were going to hear confessions that afternoon, were at their ease in the downstairs sitting room, taking a smoke and quietly enjoying the last few minutes of leisure before going over to the church.

Right at that moment the front door bell rang and shortly thereafter the housekeeper was calling for the pastor. The Monsignor grimaced as he arose, not only because of the arthritic pains in his legs, but especially because he was a priest who disliked ever being late for a priestly duty. He realized that he might be late getting back, so he told the other priests not to wait for him, but to go on over to the church when the time came.

It was only that evening, therefore, when they were all at dinner, that the Monsignor was able to tell his priests exactly what had happened. "When I went into the office," he said, "I was prepared to be very stern and to get rid of the caller as fast as I could. But when I got to the door, and saw this cold-looking girl with compressed lips and hard eyes staring at me, I knew something was wrong. Before I could say a word," the pastor continued, "this girl spoke up and said, 'How much will you charge to bury my mother?' "

"I was amazed," Monsignor said,

Father Wagner's cogent articles have appeared prominently in many clerical periodicals. He recently received his C.L. Doctorate at the Catholic University and at present is teaching Canon Law and related subjects at Assumption Seminary in Chaska, Minn.

"so I told her, 'My dear child, before we go into that let me offer you my sympathy. Such a loss is always a shock to the children. And I want you to know that I will certainly remember her and you in my prayers.' "

"When I said that," he continued in a shocked tone, "her face lost its hardness and she began to cry softly. Finally she looked up and said slowly, 'You're the third priest that I've talked to today about my mother. One refused to talk to me because we didn't have envelopes in his parish. Another demanded that we have a Solemn High Mass and when I told him we couldn't afford it, he told me to go someplace else.' The girl then sighed and said, 'Monsignor, you're the first priest to talk kindly to me since my mother died.' "

Certainly this was an unusual occurrence. Probably it would not reoccur in a hundred years. But it did happen. A combination of circumstances brought together in succession a priest who was so much a stickler for the law that he forgot the spirit of charity that the law should enkindle; and a priest, who was perhaps at the moment financially embarrassed. But because of their actions this Catholic woman received a wound to her trust in the priesthood that she will surely carry to her grave.

And it all happened because the priests, when they met the girl, were not thinking about her problem but they were thinking about themselves. They forgot, for the moment, that the caller at their door was coming to them, not as to an ordinary individual, but as priests. She wanted and expected comfort and advice. Certainly she had a right to expect that much. For every priest has the sacred office of being the dispensor of the mysteries of God.

Priestly Courtesy

When a priest goes to the front door in answer to a call, two things are to be expected of him. He should be courteous, because he is supposed to be a gentleman and he must be charitable in his speech and actions since he is a follower of Christ. Even the priest who looks upon his time "on call" as a chore or unwelcome duty will still conscientiously practice these two virtues.

The successful business man considers courtesy as a vital requirement in his employees. A prospective clerk is often given an intensive course to ground him firmly in the habit of courtesy. Those firms who follow the policy that the customer is always right, practice courtesy to the point that it almost approaches the virtue of charity. This policy is deemed necessary to secure the good will of the public. The motive is strictly utilitarian.

Anyone who goes to make a pur-

chase looks for courteous treatment as a matter of course. Even the priest expects it, although the average priest will carefully explain that he doesn't expect preferential treatment because of his Roman collar. If the salespeople, however, are ill-tempered or discourteous, the priest, like the average shopper, will not patronize that particular establishment again unless necessity or some other immediate consideration will ouweigh the discourtesy.

If the priest remembers that he is a salesman too, he will readily understand how the same rules that apply to a business will also apply to him. He has the business of helping people to save their souls and cannot afford to wait for his stock-in-trade to sell itself. First of all grace is so tangible that it can too easily be overlooked by the average Catholic. Then, too, it is too important an item to be made to convince everyone with whom he comes in contact that God and religion and everything connected with them are very important.

Executives are well aware of the fact that the first impression is usually the most important and the most lasting one. Before a salesman is permitted to work with the public, he is carefully coached. He is told what to say and how to say it. His whole demeanor is geared to please the customer.

The priest in the seminary is usually given similar instructions also. It is impressed upon him that he must, at all times, be a gentleman. He is taught the necessary and useful knowledge that he will use for the rest of his life.

There is just one big difference between the salesman and the priest, and that is the matter of incentive. The discourteous salesman, who drives customers away from the store, will lose his commision and, if there are repeated offenses, he will lose his job. And people are hired to check on the clerk's attitudes and methods. The only incentive that the priest has, is a love for souls. Usually he is entirely on his own because many of his contacts with the public are made, not in a crowded store, but in the privacy of his front office. There his attitude will greatly influence the way that people feel toward the Church and religion in general. The kind priest always draws souls to God; the harsh priest often drives them away. No priest can afford to take that chance.

It would certainly be a pity if a priest should be outdone in courtesy and kindness by a salesman who is patient with those who are demanding on his time merely because he doesn't want to lose his job. The priest has his job for life. So he must look to the reason he has for being a priest, if he wants to do his job well. He is a priest to help others save their

souls. For that reason alone he cannot be discourteous or harsh.

Certainly no one is perfect in this matter. That is the purpose for this article: not to find fault, but to remind us of fundamental principles that we may have forgotten. Because is there any one priest who never has had to reproach himself for having been abrupt or ill-tempered when on office call? Who is there who has not made a caller feel ill-at-ease or too embarrassed just because he had the nerve to bother Father? But to take pleasure in such actions and to brag about "putting him in his place" is exactly opposite the Christ-like attitude that a priest is expected to have.

But since it is so easy to acquire bad office habits that are at the same time unpriestly habits, we must be constantly on our guard to check ourselves against, at least, the more common faults into which we can so easily fall.

Common Faults

The most common fault of all is the spirit of **abruptness**. Usually the priest is accustomed to having things run the way he wants them. The Masses and services in church are held at a time that he thinks is most convenient for the people. The meals are served when he wants them. All day long he is giving advice to people who respect his opinion. If a school is connected with the parish, the priest is the last court of appeal for Sisters, parents and children. The priest, when differences of opinion arise, is expected to settle the differences quickly and justly. If the priest procrastinates or hedges when a decision is called for, he knows that he has lost a good deal of his effectiveness as an administrator.

But the very qualities of decisiveness that make the priest a good administrator can, unless he is careful, lessen his effectiveness as a priest and as a man of God. Such a priest will usually have to check a tendency to put aside and ignore opinions that are opposed to his own. This may sometimes cause him to ride rough-shod over the feelings of others. A priest of this type will think nothing of interrupting another's conversation. Nor will he consider it an offense if he reads or does something else distracting while another is talking, as if the one speaking couldn't have anything of importance to say. But even though he will make no effort to follow ideas that are being expressed, if an interesting phrase pierces the cloak of indifference, he will interrupt and ask for a repetition of all that has previously been said.

This priest, besides being rude and consequently un-Christ-like will often make many mistakes. He may make decisions before he

has all the facts. And having made a bad decision, he may feel that he is unable to retract it. The abrupt priest, very seldom takes kindly to another's suggestions.

Suggestions made by fellow priests and parishioners are seldom received kindly due to weaknesses; the first, of making snap decisions without sufficient facts and the second, a paradox, the weakness of power, coming from the opportunity afforded of running things according to one's best judgment. So, the visitor who comes to the priest with the best intentions in the world may find that his eloquent flow of words is abruptly terminated by a decisive, "I'll look into that." And, before he knows what has happened to him, the interview is over and he is shunted out the front door.

Perhaps this type of priest early in his priesthood made up his mind that no one was going to tell him how to run things. But it would be an understatement to believe that the mistake mentioned is made only by priests who have grown old in the priesthood. Actually, the newly ordained priest as well as the octogenarian can be so attached to the particular methods that he is using, for instance, in his Youth Club or Sewing Circle No. 6 that he would bitterly resent the suggestions that his pastor or superior might make. So abruptness and rudeness is not a prerogative of age. It can be associated with impetuous youth just as often. The older priest may be rude and uncooperative because he knows from experience that his way of doing things is the best way. The young priest may be abrupt in his speech and actions because he is uncertain of himself or is afraid that he may be required to change his methods of acting or that he may not be given an opportunity to be a success in his own right.

In either case, however, the conduct is inexcusable. The priest who is trying to pattern his life after that of Christ, must realize that he is dealing with humans, whose lives are not dedicated in purpose as his is supposed to be. Some people, who may try to advise him or influence him or lead him to act in a certain way, may have selfish motives. Others may be altruistic in their outlook. But in the long run, it really doesn't matter or shouldn't matter to the priest. Would it have mattered to Christ? Can you even imagine Christ telling a person to shut up? Or of being offensive in speech or act even to a conniving wretch? It is true that Christ was very strict in His dealing with the Scribes and Pharisees. After the example of Christ, the priest can act that way, too. But he must be just. And that means that he must know what he is doing. It is not a question of compromising

with principles but of applying the principles properly.

For the priest to learn to **control his speech** and to watch his every action is one of the hardest lessons that he must learn because it puts such a restraint on his natural inclinations. But, without doubt, it is a restraint that should bring about a great increase of the virtue of charity in the priest's soul.

A situation, however, that occurs less frequently except in the case of an extremely choleric priest, is one in which the priest allows himself to be gruff, ill-tempered or angry with his caller. Often the one who receives the brunt of the tongue-lashing had nothing to do with causing the anger. He just happened to be around when the priest let off steam.

Sometimes the priest is involved with pressing, personal or parochial problems when he is summoned to the front office. To concentrate on the new business involves a severe effort of the will. Unless the business is serious, or the caller is an important person, the priest will not make the effort that is required. Consequently during the interview only partial attention is given to what is being said.

If the priest continues to brood about the important business that is awaiting him or if he has an antagonistic feeling toward the caller, or disagrees with what the visitor is saying, he can allow his anxiety about other matters to cause him to loose his temper and perhaps even to become abusive in his language.

Often a priest doesn't realize what a tremendous shock it is to a member of the laity who sees or hears a priest lose his temper. Ordinarily a priest's parishioners are quite ready to condone the unbecoming actions of Father. But how can ill-tempered shouting or the use of unbecoming language be condoned by the priest himself? No matter how grave the provocation has been, he may not permit himself the luxury of losing his temper. The scandal can be too great. He, who preaches patience and long suffering, must in conscience try to practice those same virtues.

To make matters worse, sometimes the person upon whom the priest vents his anger is not even a member of the Church. The non-Catholic party of a mixed marriage who wants to argue religion or the prejudiced, biased non-Catholic who had heard nothing but evil about Catholics, can scarcely be expected to gain a true picture of the beauty and truth of the Church when the official representative of that same Church resorts to angry remarks and ungentlemanly conduct to win an argument.

If the display of anger was prompted by zeal for God, then

no one could utter a word against it. When the priest becomes excited because he sees resistance to God's grace or stubborn refusal to obey God's law, we have to show our admiration for such love and respect for the law of God. Ordinarily, however, the priest's anger doesn't spring from a zeal for God or for God's house but from pride and wounded vanity. And such anger, as the priest would tell any penitent, is always sinful. So, how careful he must be to keep from scandalously committing that sin himself can be measured only by the zeal that he has for the care of souls over whom he can exert tremendous influence in even a passing or chance meeting.

The Smug Priest

A habit that may be more irritating than anything else is the attitude of the eternally smug priest. This type is quite rare, but unfortunately we can find a trace of this quality in many ordinarly good prests. We find this attitude in the priest who manages to look down on almost everyone he meets. Sometimes, he may do this quite deliberately. And often the results are disastrous. As happened, when a certain priest met a wealthy parishioner with the pre-conceived notion that the person wanted to take advantage of him and was going to ask for a favor. The priest wasn't even courteous in his manner. As a matter of fact, he was very rude. So the parishioner who wanted to make a substantial donation to the church became annoyed by the priest's attitude, and decided then and there to give the donation to some other charity.

The Clock-Watcher Priest

Then there is, of course, the priest who is always and constantly in a hurry. Perhaps it would be better to call hi ma clock-watchbe better to call him a clock-watchers he has no real reason for being in a hurry except for a vague desire to be in a place other than where he is. This type of priest may often be seen hustling and bustling from one place to another. Often this is nothing other than what the educators call "busy work", that is, occupations that keep one occupied but which have no aim and accomplishes no purpose.

A priest like this is often annoyed if he is bothered with office calls, unless, of course they are made by his special friends and benefactors. When an ordinary person tries to make an appointment, there are innumerable postponements. When, finally, he succeeds, he may find that Father is paying but scant attention to what he does or to what he says. Father keeps looking at his watch and

complains about how busy and overworked he is. This can happen even if the person is a non-Catholic and wants to take instructions in the Faith or is a person who is involved in an invalid marriage and wishes to get a convalidation. These people may have to wait for weeks before Father will find time to take care of them. Sometimes the person's ardor cools or he begins to think of the trouble and inconvenience involved and he gives up the idea entirely. And isn't it a terrible thing if the shepherd himself is the cause of a sheep remaining outside the fold.

Certainly it is well understood that the priest can't do the impossible. With a full schedule some sort of order has to be observed in making appointments, and this is usually on a first come, first served basis. But it is unfortunate if unimportant or trivial matters interfere with priestly work. Members of the laity can't understand such an attitude. They reason that if the priest has dedicated his life to saving souls that he shouldn't renege on that promise.

Certainly the laity (and priests too) can be unreasonable at times in their demands. They expect to be able to come to the rectory at any time of the day or night and to be received kindly. They expect the priest to devote as much time and attention to their case as if he were not being imposed upon. In fact, when a person drops in at the rectory at any time, he seems to expect the priest to drop all other matters and to give his undivided attention to the caller.

In these days of tight schedules, with demands on the priest coming from all sides and with the need for proper relaxation and recreation being recommended by practically every reputable doctor because of the tension under which the average priest lives, this attitude of the laity can be considered highly unrealistic. And the priest who does not cater to those often unreasonable demands may be judged by his fellow priests and by his superiors as being wise. Because if a man kills himself with work, he can't do any good at all.

At first sight, it seems like a good argument. There is only one objection to it. The priest who doesn't die of overwork is certainly going to die of some cause —perhaps from being overly careful not to overwork. Perhaps the average priest can't feel up to giving all of himself—his time included—to God's service. But on an ideal plane, at least, he should recognize it as a better state of affairs than that of worrying whether he is getting enough fresh air and outdoor exercise.

Perhaps the thing we are asked to do is to be totally unselfish with our talents and with our time, just as our Lord was when Nicodemus

came to Him in the middle of the night. Our Lord had been preaching and teaching all day long. He was tired. Perhaps, He had hoped to recoup His strength by going apart to pray or to rest awhile. But at this most inopportune time, Nicodemus came to Him. And he came, not merely to ask a question or two and then to go, but to settle himself comfortably and to receive a regular detailed instruction from our Lord.

That is exactly what our Lord did for him. He gave freely of His time and knowledge, even answering patiently the foolish questions and objections proposed by Nicodemus.

Surely our Lord knew that He was entitled to His rest and to legitimate relaxation. If He had told Nicodemus to come back some other more convenient time, no one would have been able to say that Christ was unreasonable. Even if Nicodemus had gone away and had never returned, no one could actually say that it would have been Christ's fault at all.

But if Christ had told him to go away, He would not have been the One we love so much. The great thing about Christ that draws us to Him is the fact that He was so unselfish with everything that He possessed. Every minute of the day and night was used to help souls. Every talent that He had, He lavished upon others.

The real follower of Christ, especially the priest of Christ, must try, at least, to act as Christ acted. We know that doctors and lawyers and other professional men have set hours and won't accept calls at any other times. If a priest had a family to serve, then he could expect and demand the right to spend this time with his family, too. But the priest has a much larger family than any other professional man: every soul in need that comes to him for help and comfort is a member of his family. To refuse to console that soul is to refuse to do God's work. And what a terrible condemnation Christ must have in store for any one who takes upon himself the honor but not the burden of the priesthood.

But the priest who conscientiously tries to serve God and to help his neighbor for the love of God can expect to meet a Judge who will treat him mercifully because he was merciful. The priest must live by faith. His reward comes only in the hereafter. And his reward is to possess forever the Christ that he tried to serve so well on earth.

That prospect alone should make it easier for any priest better to serve his Master.

"What Do You Expect From A Priest?"

Rev. J. M. Jammes

BEFORE attempting a more thorough analysis of the answers given to this particular question by some 400 respondents, it seems necessary to present in their integrity at least two of them. They have been chosen not so much for their length than for their evident simplicity. The apparent disorder of the first and the organized presentation of the second are two very interesting ways to cover point by point what laymen want, or do not want, in their priests. As they are they offer material for an excellent priestly self examen.

Father Jammes continues his projected series based on his recently completed survey *"What people expect from the priest"*. Next month he will report his respondents' opinions on the *"Vocation to the Priesthood"*.

A Single woman, age 26, Austrian descent:

"That's a difficult question to answer. Theoretically I expect a great deal—in practice I am satisfied with a certain minimum. Since I do not have too much time, my answers to this question can't be too well organized, so I am not necessarily putting first things first. In general however, this is my reaction. I don't expect a priest to be a great theologian or metaphysician, but I do expect him to use his common sense, to admit what he doesn't know, and not go around making sweeping statements which I know quite well aren't true, and which I then have to go explaining and excusing to myself and to my friends.

I don't expect a priest to be a great orator either, but I don't think he's fair if he continually harangues his parishioners and I personally very much dislike having my emotions played upon too much, because, though that may be stirring, it certainly is not convincing and won't last.

And here on the subject of speaking, I come to my personal relationship with a priest. Just because I'm a lay person, I don't expect to be looked down upon by the religious—and that is not only me, but me multiplied with quite a few other people. I would like to be respected as a human person with a soul and a certain amount of sense and ideals as to how I'm going to go about saving it. I may not have studied canon law and I'm not a mystic with visions, but I do want to love God and I expect to put my religion and ideas and convictions on the same intellectual level as the rest of my life. If I read intelligent spiritual books, I'd like some encouragement and guidance—also some chance of discussing them if the need arises—and I don't want to be dismissed with "Just be a good little girl and say your prayers" or the equivalent. A priest's job isn't only to reform the bad, but also to help the—relatively—good. And just because I don't commit murder or adultery, or flagrantly miss Mass on Sunday, doesn't mean that I am perfect—as a matter of fact I am very far from it. But why doesn't the priest ever worry about me and all the others like me, instead of just patting us on the back? Some of us already have some idea of a deepening of the interior life—why doesn't he encourage it? Some of us would love it, if someone would show us what it is and how one goes about it—why doesn't he try to teach us?

What do I expect of a priest? Principally this—that he remembers the priesthood is a vocation and not just another eight-hour day job.

And that he is proud of being a priest instead of eternally trying to pretend that he is "just like all the other boys" and only happens to wear a roman collar. If he happens to personally like baseball, that's fine. If he thinks he can get closer to people through it, that's fine too. But does it have to become his exclusive topic of conversation? To the extent where when you actually want to talk about God, he won't? And on the other side of that picture, is the priest who is forever throwing "pious" phrases around. I'd like him a lot better, if he would be natural about his religion. I am. That means that I don't limit my topics of conversation to religious ones—even when talking to a priest; but their relationship to God and their value in the overall

picture of life is something I don't want to overlook.

I—and a lot of other lay people—would occasionally like a chance to talk. He'll never know how his people think or feel if he does-not give them a chance to speak up. And if at first they won't there is a very simple way of questioning them, of asking them their ideas, of drawing them out, that would be most revealing and helpful to the priest if he would take the time and the trouble.

I don't expect a priest to be a saint, but I would like to be able to personally respect him, and I don't like to have to make excuses for him to other people—especially to non-Catholics. That goes for a great many things—the priest who has a new car, television, and heaven knows what else, but is always hounding his parishioners for money; the country priest who attends too many social affairs; etc., not to mention those who give actual cause for grave scandal.

I expect the priest to have time for his parishioners. If it is really impossible for him to see them at the time that they have come, instead of curtly brushing them off and finishing them in a hurry, say frankly that you can't see them right now but do let them know that you **really want** to see them and promptly suggest another more convenient time. Certain rules of common courtesy apply to priests too, even if they are priests, though they unfortunately don't feel that way about it.

A married woman, age 24, Irish descent.

"This question really catches me off-guard. I suppose the poor priest would have to be a theologian, philosopher, psychologist, psychiatrist, judge, human relations expert and politician to live up to my expectancies. But perhaps we could break this down by considering the priest in various phases of his activity.

On the altar, I expect a dignified representative of Christ who is re-enacting the Last Supper and the Crucifixion so convincingly as to bring us back 2000 years as eyewitnesses. I expect to get the idea that I'm co-offering the Sacrfice. I never want him to step out of his role as Christ's substitute by going through the motions carelessly or in any other way.

In the confessional, I expect a spiritual adviser. I want him to actually listen to my sins, ask questions if necessary, and say at least a few words regarding my habits. I don't want to be just a number on the Saturday assembly line, who is given a quick hearing, a quicker blessing and standard penance, then whisked away.

In the rectory, I expect the priest to be accessible, and to make me feel welcome.

On the street, I expect a polite, but not ice cold, greeting.

At a place of recreation, (ball field, bowling alley, parish picnic, etc.) I expect good, clean sportsmanship with no flares of temper, or obvious prejudices or the like.

In the home, I expect the priest to feel as one of the family without forgetting he is not. Here I like to hear him express personal viewpoints and subjects in which we all have interests. I want him to feel free to say things without having to worry about them being misinterpreted.

In the school, I expect the priest to be understanding of the ways of the children, to be their example and incentive to live good Catholic lives close to Mary and her Son. I want impartiality and gentleness, yet firmness. I don't want him to be afraid of lessening his popularity with his parochial school following by reprimanding them when necessary.

At parish meetings, I expect the priest to be a real leader, moderator, without playing dictator.

When his parishioners have sorrow, I expect the priest to console them, to be their comforter, to help them be completely resigned to the will of God.

When they have occasion to rejoice, I want the priest to share their joy and at the same time to be the subtle reminder that God has blessed them for a definite, though unknown reason, and it is His to give and to take, not ours.

Throughout his parish, the priest should be a familiar figure.

I expect the priest to speak up and inform his parishioners of the Church's stand on controversal issues as race prejudice, birth control, mixed marriage, and so on.

It looks like I expect the impossible of the priest, but with God's grace all things are possible."

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The Function Of A Parish

Msgr. Giovanni B. Montini

WHAT is a parish? A parish is the smallest portion of the one and universal flock entrusted to Peter by Our Lord. Under the authority of a conscientious priest, who has received from his own Bishop the responsibility of the care of souls, it is, in the Church of Christ, the first community of Christian life, a community conforming to man's requirements in such a way that the shepherd may know his sheep and the sheep their shepherd. A defined territory determines its limits within the Diocese, so that the parish is fixed to a certain portion of land, it is inserted in the local traditions and within definite boundaries. In the very heart of this territory the parochial church is to be seen, with its towering steeple, its baptistry, its confessional, its altar, its tabernacle, standing as the symbol of the unity of the faithful and the centre of their spiritual life.

For, it is important to remember, the parish is first of all a centre of religious life and of missionary radiation; those who are in the truest sense its members are to be counted at the foot of the altar when the priest distributes the Bread of Life.

The parish priest is not the chief of his community in the common sense of the word; he is rather the servant of God's people, having received spiritual authority over his sheep only to be in their midst the dispenser of the Mysteries of God "so that they may have life and have it more abundantly"

These remarks are quoted from a letter sent by Msgr. Giovanni Montini, Vatican Pro-Secretary of State, to James Cardinal McGuigan, Archbishop of Toronto, on the occasion of the Canadian Catholic Social Conference held in the first week of August, 1953.

(John 10, 10). To make Jesus known, loved and served by all: this is, according to the very words of the Holy Father, the aim of all parochial life. And His Holiness does not hesitate to insist: "All the other things are to be valued inasmuch and in the measure that they contribute to the realization of the aim which the Church wishes to obtain. The field of sport, the theatre, the parochial cinema, even the school, if there be one,—all very useful and often necessary institutions—do not constitute the centre of the parish. The centre is the church.... The centre is called the 'life of souls', it is called Jesus" (Address to a Parish of Rome, Jan. 11, 1953). Now it is exactly such a parish, a true living and active cell of Christ's Body, which is called upon, if it is to be faithful to its own religious mission, to play a role of primary importance in the regeneration of modern society.

The parish, by its very stability, is the support of the social edifice. "Man, such as God wishes him and as the Church receives him into her fold, will never feel firmly established in space and time without stable territory and without traditions" (Consistorial Allocution, of Feb. 20, 1946). Now the parish is the Church with its roots in the soil of every land, with its permanent institutions and its wealth of experience: around the church-spire, generations succeed each other uninterruptedly, the families which have sealed their union before the altar never cease to find there the principle of their cohesion and strength, while in the Catholic school their children receive an education which perpetuates, with supernatural faith, the ancestral virtues of the Christian family. By the ministry of the priest residing amidst his people, the Church penetrates the most intimate depths of the human being; she reaches man within himself, among his own people, in his concrete and historic reality which one cannot fail to take into account without compromising the normal order of the human community. When one realizes the dangers of the exodus from the rural areas, when one has seen the psychological and moral disasters of the displacements of populations, how can there fail to be appreciated the inestimable benefit for society of a strong and stable parish!

Even more, the parish is the educator of social life by the extent of its human composition, which permits community life to achieve its purpose, namely, the union of men among themselves through bonds of friendship. In this great family, of which the priest is the father, where no one is a stranger to the others, where, as far as possible, the joy and the sadness of each are the joy and the sadness of all, the Christian

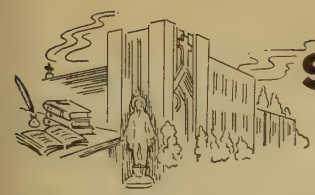
discovers the daily requirements of charity; he realizes in practice all that is implied by the admonition of St. John: "For how can he who does not love his brother, whom he sees, love God, whom he does not see?" (1 John 4, 20). The parish united and fervent becomes then the soil most suited for the growth of those precious virtues which ought to animate human relations; it is above all the field of action for charitable and social initiatives which supplement the inevitable limits of official organizations.

In our tragically divided society, does not the parish, furthermore, function as a school of peace and of social justice, inviting all the faithful, without distinction, to unite with one another around its altar? Intellectuals and illiterates, poor and rich, employers and employees, gather there together on the basis of Christian equality: "here there is not 'Gentile and Jew', ... 'slave and freeman'; but Christ is all things and in all" (Col. 3, 11). In relation to this common and eminent dignity, the legitimate social differences are of secondary importance; without ignoring these differences, even allowing for them in the diversity of its associations of a cultural and apostolic nature, the parish rises above them by remaining not only open to all, but even better, accessible and extending its welcome to all. Its spirit is that of the peace of Christ, unto which we have been called to form one body (Col. 3, 15). But it is also a spirit of justice, which tolerates neither the shameless contrast of wealth and misery among the members of the parish community, nor the hypocrisy of a fraternity in church that would not have for its effect that of creating, at work, more fraternal social relations. Indeed, does not the parish altar, the center around which the most sacred bonds of union are formed, invite each and every one who comes before it to make an examination of conscience in regard to his duties of justice towards his brethren? (Matth. 5, 23).

The parish is, finally, the basic cell of social life because it is the centre of public prayer. In the midst of unrest and agitation among the multitudes and of spiritual dissipation, in a withering atmosphere of temporal cares, the parish church, where the people gather to render glory to God and to implore His grace through Jesus Christ, is for the whole of society an ark of salvation. It is at the foot of the Altar of Sacrifice, around the pulpit whence comes the word of truth, that the Sunday rest takes on its full meaning: a cessation from labor, and repose of the body and of the soul: it is this of course—and it is not easy to find words to praise sufficiently the parish initiatives directed at offering to the young people espe-

cially a means of satisfying their justified desires for culture or relaxation,—but above all, it is a day consecrated to the worship of God, in that communal and social form that is due Him. According to Leo XIII, as the Holy Father recently mentioned in recalling the words of "Rerum Novarum", the sanctification of Sundays and Feast Days is "a sign which evidences if, and to what point, a sound mankind and a true harmony of progress are still continuing to exist in human society... Technical and economic science and society evidence their level of moral soundness by the manner in which they favor or oppose the sanctification of Sunday" (Address, May 14, 1953, A.A.S.).

At the conclusion of these reflections, it would not be proper to pass over, without a word of special praise, the Canadian parish, which is the object to be considered and to be benefited by the labors of these two weeks of Social Study. The Holy Father is aware of the merits that the parish has acquired in Canada during more than three centuries of service to your country and He appreciates its beneficient action with the effect that this has had upon so many sectors of social life. This action is due unquestionably to the value of your priests in the formation of the religious and moral life of the people and they in the humble accomplishment of their priestly ministry, are the first-line soldiers "on the battle-front of a general renewal of Christian life, on the line of defense of moral values, for the realization of social justice and for the reconstruction of a Christian order" (Exhortation, February 10, 1952). It is due to the penetration being made on all sides by her lay apostles of Catholic Action "by which the Church is the vital principle of human society" (Consistorial Allocution, cited above); these militant lay people are the Church spread out in the world of labor or of culture, throughout the workshops and in the homes, and their presence there stimulates a Christian regeneration. It is due, finally, to the convincing evidence of her community united in faith, in prayer and in charity, an evidence whose remarkable power to uplift society has already been shown in apostolic times. It is to be hoped that each parish, by its fervor and its unity, may again in the world of today be able to bear witness to a social ideal too much misunderstood, and be, at the same time, a centre of attraction for all men of good will.



seminary memoirs

INTER NOS

WE were last time speaking of institutional work with the "juvenile offender", "delinquent", "problem child", or what you will. I reported that I had conducted something of a survey, casual and small-time as it no doubt was, and was citing as a part of its results the judgments it brought in of three Catholic authorities in the field. They are Father Raymond J. Gallagher of Cleveland, Father Francis A. Schmidt of Hoban Heights, Pennsylvania, and Brother Norbert, C.S.C., of Terre Haute, Indiana. With the reader's kind indulgence, I shall conclude in this space the report I commenced last issue, and which I thought it best not to compress in the one article.

The fourth of the five questions which made up the questionnaire that I sent out read as follows: "Would you give me your frank opinion of the rehabilitory value, if any, of psychological-psychiatric 'treatment' of problem boys as you have had experience of it?"

To this question Father Gallagher answered: "My experience with the psychological-psychiatric approach to problems of youth is such as would incline me to say that it is a very practical method of dealing with delinquency...." Father Schmidt had this to say: "Psychological-psychiatric treatment of problem boys certainly has rehabilitory value. It may not always have the desired results, but there is a definite place for such treatment in making a remedial approach to a boy whose life is out of gear in some way or another."

But Brother Norbert answers my question in this fashion: "Practically all boys admitted here (*) have had such tests and diagnoses. With their case history we received the reports of the various tests. About 95% of the work is useless. Our policy, and we have had very good results and that is the criterion, is to do away with the shams and fads of the modern trends. We place the boy in normal boy-environs and treat him as a real boy with kindness and firmness. On entrance he does not

* Gibault School for Boys, Terre Haute, Ind.

go through a quarantine period or a question and answer period. He enters the school as any boy would enter a regular and normal school. We do not remind him of his past but stress in the normal ways the should follow — this more by example than by words or lectures."

The final question of the five I asked was framed this way: "What would be your advice to the Priest who would like to be of some help to such boys but doesn't know quite how?" Answers Father Schmidt: "...I have found most difficult boys approachable and the way to help them is to first gain their confidence and then seek avenues to their hearts."

Father Gallagher has several suggestions to make. Says he, "Since it is not a privilege of every priest to have graduate studies in psychology or counselling and guidance, it is still possible that a priest's own reading would include many books written by reputable Catholic psychiatrists and guidance experts. I will admit that the literature of the field is largely non-Catholic, but I am still convinced that if we as priests were to create the market for such writings by our thirst for them, we would find many qualified Catholic authors addressing themselves to these problems. Read all that you can about the psychology of adolescents and talk with the people in your community who are dealing with adolescents. Learn from the experience of Catholic probation officers and Judges, school psychologists. Digest the results of this inquisitiveness and come up with a set of principles which will make you a more effective priest in combatting evil as it is attacking our youth. We are pledged to help the souls of mankind to emerge successful from their battles with evil. As you well know, Satan is no less busy with the souls of adolescents than with yours and mine."

Brother Norbert has this sound advice to offer us: "First and above all do not take a sentimental attitude towards the boys. Be real. They are real boys who have made a mistake. They think. They respond to manly and trustworthy interest that may be shown them. Guide them but do not force— morally, physically, or by sentimental persuasion. Do not nag. Work positively rather than negatively with them. Put the ideals before them. Stress the results of good action rather than the results of bad action. Get them to realize the honor of being in the army of Christ instead of the army of Satan."

That, believe me, is very good counsel.

With this, then, and with thanks to Fathers Schmidt and Gallagher and Brother Norbert, we may bring to a close these few remarks on a situation of great moment

and a problem of great concern to every Priest and seminarian. I hope that they may have been of value to the reader, and that they will have stimulated his solicitude for the younger variety of wandering sheep.

* * *

JUST out of curiosity, the other day I went over some of the letters from Priests and religious which I have received in the last several months since last September or so. I was looking at "closings", at the "Yours truly" and "Sincerely yours" correspondents generally put just above their signatures. Out of about fifty of these letters something less than half employed any formula in their "closings" that would indicate their consecration to Christ and His Mother. Over half were quite indistiguishable from any routine business letter one might receive, at least in this one respect. "Sincerely" may be all well and good as the sign-off for the Executive Vice-President of Standard Oil's correspondence, but it would seem to me that the addition of some such fitting formula as "In Christ" would be more worthy of a Priest's letter or a religious' letter.

For my part, it warms my heart to see people end their letters with something to proclaim their incorporation in Christ, or their devotion to His cause, or to His Saints. Thumbing through these letters I speak of, I find many very beautiful formulas which when I came to them impressed upon me the brotherhood I had with the writer, or inspired a raising of my mind to the contemplation of some holy thought and impelled an aspiration. One such formula that has stuck in my mind was that with which the Abbot of Gethsemani ended a letter he wrote me. "All for Jesus—through Mary—with a smile" is what he wrote, and how revealing did I find those words!

Let us see to it that all of our letters without exception have something in them to betray us for what we are, or perhaps for what we ought to be.

* * *

And with this said it is time for me to close this series by thanking reader for patience and editor for opportunity to try it. The press of duties is such that I shall have to discontinue my contributions to this fledgling journal. I do most sincerely hope, though, that what I have written for these pages in the past months may have been of some small value to the kind reader. In any event, his prayers are very earnestly asked that however poorly I may well have preached in these columns, I may come to practice the same as well as I ought. God be good to you all!

—Francis Edw. Nugent.

Pastoral Reflections

By Rev. T. C. Siekmann

SAVING SOULS WITH MONEY

A priest in parish work is necessarily much concerned with money. While he is offering the bread and wine at Mass the people are distracting him by dropping coins noisily into the basket. (They should be using their envelopes with silent money.) Right after Mass part of his thanksgiving is to gather up the collection. He spends a good part of the Lord's day counting and putting away the Sunday collection. A good part of Monday morning may be taken up by his weekly trip to the bank. His account books crowd aside his spiritual reading books. Festivals, bazaars, activities of all sorts eat into his time—all to make money. Many priests spend considerably more time with money than with prospective converts. But looked at right, we save souls with money. Without the costly parish school we could not train children in the faith. Without assessments we could not support diocesan works. Without our physical plant we could not even have the Mass, or preach the word of God, or house Christ in the Eucharist, or forgive sins. It takes money to keep up the parish buildings. And they are tools for our work with souls. So really, no matter how time-consuming and irksome gathering money can be, it is one phase of the work of saving souls, and it does take money to save souls. When I am working with money I am still doing the work of the Lord.

SELLING RELIGION

Selling any worthwhile product depends not on trickery but on skillful salesmanship. Of course one has to have a worthwhile product to start with. Then there are the potential customers. Then—very important—the salesman. In religion we certainly have a worthwhile product. All souls are our potential customers. **We** are the salesmen. Winning converts to the faith or to high sanctity within the faith, or both, is largely a matter of salesmanship, in the good sense of the term. Like good salesmen we have to be convinced of the worth of our product, we have to make people see their need for this product. We cannot force their acceptance. We do not intend to. They have to choose freely to want what we tell them they need. But there is a big difference between selling religion and any other product. We have it easier than the ordinary salesman. He has to relp on his selling techniques alone. With us, the grace of God moves the people to accept

(*Concluded on page* 43)

BOOK-REVIEW Selections

OUTLINES OF MORAL THEOLOGY, by Francis J. Connell, C.SS.R., S.T.D., LL.D. The Bruce Publishing Co. 260 pp., $2.75.

Father Connell has provided an excellent summary of moral theology written particularly for the layman who needs moral guidance for his own specific problems. The average adult Catholic usually has no opportunity for good personal direction or information. Confessors are too few and too busy; sermons in church or in retreats are too general; most treatises on moral theology are for religious only; prayerbooks are too vague. Therefore Father Connell has supplied an invaluable aid for the serious Catholic by offering explicit examples that apply to the average person.

The book is divided into three parts: 1. General Moral Theology, 2. The Virtues in Particular, 3. The Sacraments. Each section contains a great amount of material, expressed in a vivid, concise and impressive style. Father Connell does not insult the reader's intelligence by talking 'down' to him; he gives the layman credit for really wanting to know his moral obligations. Painstakingly he quotes how many pages of a forbidden book must be read in order for a mortal sin to be committed; how many ounces of food violate fast and abstinence. Father Connell does his very best to dispel any doubts, to resolve all questions regarding the commandments and precepts of the Church.

There is one minor flaw. After explaining the principle of double effect the renowned theologian suggests some problems to be discussed. In the chapter on conscience he again introduces several situations to be answered by the reader. Many of these are solved later under various headings, but if the reader is not able to read the book in a short time, or has a poor memory, these questions will disturb him. Since this is for the layman, less of a textbook approach would seem more appropriate.

This book will repay anyone who reads it and will be a helpful consultant as a reference in the home library. **—D. V. Catalano.**

HISTORY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, by Paul Heinisch. Translated by William Heidt, O.S.B. Liturgical Press. 492uu. $6.50.

Here is a book which should have a wide reading public. It is clear, interesting, informative, non-controversial and scholarly.

And in the absence of Catholic commentaries in English on most of the Old Testament books, it partially fills a great need in the scriptural field. Doctor Heinisch is eminently qualified to deal with this subject, since he has spent nearly half a century in the study and interpretation of the Old Testament. The copious documentation of his book is sufficient proof of his competence.

The **History** is divided into eight sections: Primitive History; the Patriarchs; the Ages of Moses; the Period of Josue and Judges; the Era of Tribal Unity; the Divided Kingdom; the Period of the Exile and Persian Rule, and finally the Greek and Roman Period. Under each heading there is: first, a clear and concise narrative of the facts related in the Bible; second, a scrutiny of these facts according to the principes of Catholic exegsis (i.e., can they be reconciled with the findings of science and archaeology, and to what extent); third, a description of the cultural and religious conditions among the Israelites at that particular period.

The Old Testament abounds in difficult problems, which have puzzled exegetes as well as the general reader ever since Patristic times. What is an acceptable explanation of the meaning of the six days of creation? How literally must we interpret the text which describes the creation of Adam and Eve? What is the age of the human race? What about the great longevity of the patriarchs? How widespread was the Deluge? What is the significance of the table of nations in Gen. 10, and of the confusion of tongues in Gen. 11? These are a few of the many questions that come to the mind of a thoughtful reader of the Old Testament. Father Heinisch treats them all in turn and offers a solution which he claims is not at variance with faith or science. We may not agree with him regarding every one of his solutions, but at least we find here a reasonable answer to the difficulties.

Henry Willmering, S.J.

FUNDAMENTAL PSYCHIATRY, by John R. Cavanagh, M.D., and James B. McGoldrick, Ph.D. The Bruce Publishing Co. 582 pp. $5.50.

The comparatively new science of psychiatry assumes a growing importance in modern life. One well-known authority estimates that almost one-half of the entire adult population of the United States is neurotic to a greater or lesser degree. Whether or not this is true, neuroses and complexes have become common subjects of dinner-table conversation, and cinematic versions of dream sequences and "couch therapy" tint the average person's idea of psychiatric practice until there is no longer any doubt that wider publicity should be given to the down-to-earth facts of mental therapy.

In **Fundamental Psychiatry** the authors have provided a complete manual of basic psychiatric information for the informed reader

and interested professional person. Written by a practicing psychiatrist in collaboration with a teaching psychologist, the book offers a thorough and authoritative treatment of the many facets, normal and otherwise, of the complex personality.

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What is a neurotic? Are neurotic ailments real?

Can mental emotional factors cause actual physical illness?

The book differs from most books on psychiatry in that the authors have recognized that an adequate philosophy of life is basic to psychic poise and that psychiatric theories without a philosophical anchor are meaningless. Their book, therefore, has both the fundamental information and the philosophical interpretation that gives real significance to psychiatry as an aid to human happiness and peace of mind. It draws freely upon actual case histories of a practicing psychiatrist and covers the entire scope of this fascinating science. Well organized,

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interestingly written, and sparked with graphic case histories, **Fundamental Psychiatry** represents a much-needed contribution to improve understanding of psychiatry as it is practiced today.

THE PAIN OF CHRIST, by Gerald Vann, O.P. Templegate, Springfield, Ill. $2.00.

This slim volume is one of the finest books on suffering. He who suffers resignedly will be helped by it to reach fuller resignation, and it should reduce the rebellion of the unwilling.

The author links the sufferings of Christ and Mary with ours. He urges us to use the sacrament of the present moment, putting all our fears and prayers and sorrows into God's hands. By doing this we show our love for God and secure peace for ourselves. Our Lord was betrayed in many ways —by Peter, other disciples, the Jewish people, Judas, by us when we sin. Pride drove Judas to stubbornness and despair, but Peter's fall was followed by humility and deeper love. Sin is the only real bondage. Calvary leads to Paradise. Worldly possessions turn to husks if we love them apart from God.

There is a fine chapter on the stillness of Mary. When Mary met Jesus and when she was at the Cross, she loved and suffered and was still. Her sympathy went from her heart to the Heart of Christ without words. There is so much suffering because there is so much sin. God does not destroy free-will, and that means man can return hatred for love if he chooses. Hell on earth, as hereafter, is caused by our rejection of God, not His rejection of us. We can heal or hurt people just as we can make or mar a day.

The good theif gained paradise because he loved much, was immediately prepared. We too shall be judged on our charity. When we sin we crucify God as did the soldiers of Golgotha. And when we suffer, God is as concerned about it as He was about the sorrows of Jerusalem. The crucifixion was an event of a certain year, but the Cross is for all time. If we lose our sense of triumph in the Cross we also lose our sense of balance about suffering.

Rev. Paul Gilmore.

Pastoral Reflections

(*Concluded from page* 40)

our, that is God's product. But this advantage does not excuse us from effort. We still have to use all the psychologically correct techniques to win people over. Grace builds on the natural. We set the scene, and God appears, as it were, to clinch the argument. Since God sees fit to depend on our efforts, then when we are poor salesmen we inhibit the sale. God Himself does not dispense with our salesmanship. Souls are saved and sanctified largely in proportion to the amount of skill and effort we put into the task—we and all others working and praying with us.

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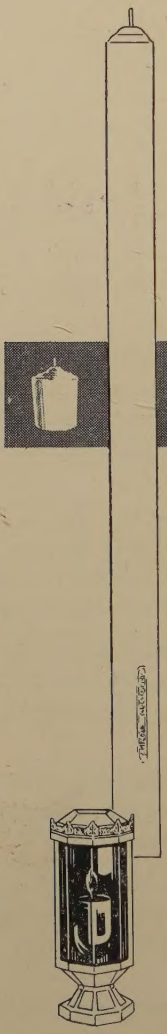

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